



## STURGIS AMBULANCE SERVICE



## 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

The Ambulance Service serves the residents of Sturgis as well as communities in western Meade County and eastern Lawrence County including lower Boulder Canyon. Service territory also includes the I-90 corridor between exits 40 and 28, north to the Belle Fourche River, and along Highway 79 to 194th Street. This is a service area of approximately 500 square miles, primarily in Meade County.

The Ambulance Service also serves the Fort Meade Veterans' Hospital and Sturgis Regional Hospital by transporting patients to and from other facilities in the Hills.

The Ambulance Service also takes intercepts from the communities of Newell, Faith, Eagle Butte, and Enning as required by existing Memorandums of Understanding for Advanced Life Support (ALS) care.

The Ambulance Service is also very active with outreach to the Sturgis community.

## ANNUAL CALL VOLUME

The Ambulance Service was dispatched out for 1,956 calls in 2014, an increase of 10.57% versus 2013 call volume. Each year since 2011, the Service has seen its call volume increase in double digits.

| <u><i>Year</i></u> | <u><i>Total Calls</i></u> | <u><i>Increase versus<br/>Prior Year</i></u> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 2009               | 1,076                     | -  |
| 2010               | 1,191                     | 9.66%  |
| 2011               | 1,385                     | 14.01%                                       |
| 2012               | 1,593                     | 15.02%                                       |
| 2013               | 1,769                     | 11.05%                                       |
| <b>2014</b>        | <b>1,956</b>              | <b>10.57%</b>                                |

In order to respond appropriately to this increased call volume, the Service has increased our in station crews to three staggered shifts the station during the day (6am to 6pm, 10am to 10pm, and 8am to 4pm). We have one crew on from 6pm to 6am with early evening support from the daytime 10am to 10pm crew. We often try to have a stand-by crew lined up in case the primary crew(s) are called out. Further, the Service has incentive plans in place to insure stand-by coverage at night for faster response time.

On May 1, 2014, we implemented the ImageTrend EMS Service Bridge for reporting. This system links to our billing software eliminating the need for redundant data entry. ImageTrend also provides much more detailed analytics about our call volume than our prior software package. Here are some of the highlights. *(Please keep in mind that these stats are for the 1,470 calls we had after May 1<sup>st</sup>. These are not annualized statistics.)*

65.65% of the calls originated in Sturgis. 18.30% originated at Fort Meade VA facilities.  
58.57% of our call volume was 911 Emergent.  
80.95% of the time, EMS staff transport the patient. Our rate of refusals for care is 8.37%.

87.17% of the time our crews are enroute to a dispatched call in less than 3 minutes. Our average times to be enroute is 1 minute, 48 seconds. In a field where minutes literally make the difference between life and death of a patient, this average time to enroute is critical for our community.

74.08% of our calls have been Advanced Life Support (ALS). ALS calls are billed at a higher rate than a Basic Life Support (BLS) call.

We responded to more calls involving men than women. (Only 31.16% of our calls were female.)  
The majority of our patients are Caucasian-White (81.90%).

81.69% of our total patients were 45 years or older. 51.83% of our total patients were ages 55 to 74.

## RALLY RELATED CALL VOLUME

As usual, the 2014 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally was a busy season for the Sturgis Ambulance Service. The total call volume in 2014 was up 9.84% versus the 2013 call volume for the same day of the week. In 2014, the Ambulance Service again staged an ambulance out east of Sturgis during the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and that decreased response time. This practice was started in 2013. We also provided support to the Buffalo Chip in the form of backboards in order to ensure better patient care and faster transfer when our crews arrived on scene. The Buffalo Chip also agreed to run under the Sturgis Ambulance Service's medical protocols for the same reasons.

| <u>DATE</u>                | <u>2014</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2012</u> | <u>2011</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Thursday, July 31, 2014    | 7           | 7           | 5           | 6           |
| Friday, August 01, 2014    | 16          | 11          | 8           | 10          |
| Saturday, August 02, 2014  | 22          | 20          | 13          | 11          |
| Sunday, August 03, 2014    | 17          | 17          | 16          | 14          |
| Monday, August 04, 2014    | 27          | 34          | 34          | 25          |
| Tuesday, August 05, 2014   | 18          | 22          | 25          | 16          |
| Wednesday, August 06, 2014 | 23          | 33          | 32          | 21          |
| Thursday, August 07, 2014  | 20          | 23          | 16          | 18          |
| Friday, August 08, 2014    | 29          | 14          | 16          | 12          |
| Saturday, August 09, 2014  | 21          | 14          | 12          | 19          |
| Sunday, August 10, 2014    | 12          | 5           | 6           | 10          |
| <b><u>RALLY TOTALS</u></b> | <b>212</b>  | <b>193</b>  | <b>178</b>  | <b>156</b>  |

*Note: These are the call volume for the same day of Rally (not the same calendar date.)*

| <u>DATE</u>                        | <u>TRANSFER*</u> | <u>MEDICAL</u> | <u>TRAUMA</u> | <u>CANCEL</u> | <u>STANDBY</u> |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Thursday, July 31, 2014            | 3                | 4              | 0             | 0             | 0              |
| Friday, August 01, 2014            | 9                | 5              | 1             | 1             | 0              |
| Saturday, August 02, 2014          | 5                | 8              | 8             | 1             | 0              |
| Sunday, August 03, 2014            | 5                | 5              | 7             | 0             | 0              |
| Monday, August 04, 2014            | 5                | 6              | 15            | 0             | 1              |
| Tuesday, August 05, 2014           | 7                | 6              | 3             | 0             | 2              |
| Wednesday, August 06, 2014         | 1                | 11             | 9             | 1             | 1              |
| Thursday, August 07, 2014          | 6                | 6              | 6             | 2             | 0              |
| Friday, August 08, 2014            | 7                | 12             | 9             | 1             | 0              |
| Saturday, August 09, 2014          | 3                | 11             | 5             | 1             | 1              |
| Sunday, August 10, 2014            | 1                | 6              | 2             | 2             | 1              |
| <b><u>2014 RALLY TOTALS</u></b>    | 52               | 80             | 65            | 9             | 6              |
| <b><u>2013 RALLY TOTALS</u></b>    | 42               | 68             | 80            | 3             | Not Avail.     |
| <b><i>CHANGE VS YEAR PRIOR</i></b> | 123.1%           | 117.6%         | -19.9%        | 300.0%        |                |

\* Transfers are the movement of patients between medical facilities within the Regional Health System and the VA Health System or between the two health systems.

## STAFFING

The Sturgis Ambulance Service is under the medical direction of Dr. Michael Hogue. Hogue has served as Medical Director since 2012. Dr. Hogue is a board certified family physician in Sturgis. He is affiliated with Sturgis Regional Hospital and Rapid City Regional. Dr. Hogue takes an active role as Medical Director and regularly meets and trains with staff. He reviews the emergency medical protocols regularly to insure compliance with local, state and federal mandates as well as best medical practices. The City is extremely pleased to have Dr. Hogue serve in his capacity of Medical Director for the Sturgis Ambulance Service. His role as Medical Director is solidified through a contract for professional services with the City of Sturgis. The City and Dr. Hogue renewed that contract at the end of 2014.

The Ambulance Service is led by Shawn Fischer, Ambulance Director. She assumed leadership of the Service in the Director is a Critical Care Paramedic with certifications for pediatric care (PALS), Advanced Life Support (ALS), and PEPP. Director Fischer has 25 years of emergency medicine experience and is also an LPN. Director Fischer is a Certified Ambulance Coder (CAC). (She is also a certified firefighter.)

The Ambulance Service is supported by 2 Cadets (under 18), 4 EMRs, 19 EMT-Basics, 8 EMT-I85s, 1 EMT-I99, 1 EMT-Advanced, 9 Paramedics, and 4 Critical Care Paramedics. Of these employees, there are 3 full time Critical Care Paramedics (including the Director), 6 full time Paramedics, 1 half time Critical Care Paramedic, 1 half time Paramedic/Biller, 2 half time EMT-I85s, 5 half time EMT-Bs. One Critical Care Paramedic also serves as a part-time supervisor. One EMT-I85 also works as a Biller. The Service also has a part-time Mechanic and a full time Administrative Assistant.

The Service is honored to have 4 active members of the National Guard employed with us.

EMRs (Emergency Medical Responders) must have 80 hours of classroom training, have 10 hours of ride-time, and pass an exam. EMT-Basics must complete 120 hours of classroom training, 12 patient contacts, and pass written and practical exams. They must also complete field training with the Sturgis Ambulance Service on our protocols, etc and demonstrate competence in 143 areas. EMT-Intermediates must complete an additional 80 hours of classroom training, 32 patient contacts, and pass written and practical exams. EMT-Advanced (new national designation) must complete 120 additional hours of classroom training (versus EMT-Basics), 32 patient contacts, and complete field training with the Service. (The Advanced certification allows for administration of some drugs (no narcotics) in comparison to the Intermediate certification.) Paramedics must complete an additional 2 years of classroom training (they often receive an Associates' Degree), 300 hours of ride-alongs, and pass written and practical exams. They too must complete a comprehensive field training with the Service demonstrating competence with 143 skills. Critical Care Paramedics must take an additional 80 hours of training and pass a comprehensive exam.

These employees cover 12 and 24 hour shifts as primary crew members. They also come in to serve on standby crews and/or to take transfers between medical facilities. They also respond to major emergencies (i.e. vehicle accident on the Interstate) to support scheduled crews. The community relies heavily on the expertise and dedication of our part-time employees.

The staff was greatly impacted by the unexpected passing of EMT-B Brent Lyons in February. Brent regularly worked a couple hundred hours a year for the Service, but was very active in the Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department, which is co-located with the Ambulance Service at 1901 Ball Park Road.

All our Billers, including the Ambulance Director, are Certified Ambulance Coders through NAAC (National Academy of Ambulance Coding).

Our Ambulance Director received one of 6 supervisors to receive the "Patriotic Award" from the ESGR, recognizing her for the outstanding support she gives to our employees who are also National Guard employees. As a result, she got to participate in the annual "Boss Lift" event.



## FINANCIALS

In 2014, billing was handled internally by Department staff. The Service received its Medicare certification in March 2014 after more than a year of documentation filing and paperwork.

Two EMS employees have been cross trained and certified as Certified Ambulance Coders (CAC) to handle billing responsibilities.

Year-end Cash Balance as of December 31, 2014: (\$196,601.18)

Net Accounts Receivable as of December 31, 2014: \$272,252.84

Gross Accounts Receivable: \$1,067,224.93 (Estimate that \$793,970.55 is uncollectable)\*  
2014 Revenue: \$994,264.93



Total Operating Expenditures 2014: \$1,264,868.55  
Transfer Out: \$34,626  
Depreciation: \$86,599.33  
Total Capital Expenditures 2014: \$0

\*It is important to note that industry wide, 40 to 60% of accounts receivable are considered uncollectable. The City of Sturgis estimates approximately a 45% uncollectable rate. This percentage is based on our historical revenue and the Ft. Meade (federal) revenue stream. The Service must still bill the full rate, but due to the fact that actual reimbursements are established via contracts with private insurance companies, Medicaid and Medicare for rates lower than the billed rate, reimbursements are actually lower. (This is normal in all medical services and a challenge faced by all providers, not just the Sturgis Ambulance Service.) A smaller percentage of uncollectable is due to non-payment by the patient, in cases where there is no insurance/Medicare/Medicaid coverage. We sent those accounts to collections prior to writing them off.

At the end of 2014, the staff began steps to send uncollected claims to small claims court, partnering with the City Attorney's office.

## TRAINING

Certified EMTs are required to perform 96 hours of continuing education every two years. The Sturgis Ambulance Service hosts the training necessary for our EMTs to retain their certification by using staff Paramedics and local resources to provide the training in house. EMTs from Enning, Whitewood, Belle Fourche, and Newell have attended this training in the past in order to keep their certifications.

In 2014, the Ambulance Director began providing EMT continuing education training to the Newell Ambulance Service in order to help them keep their certifications current. This benefits our Ambulance Service by having trained EMS in the Newell response area. We provide intercept service to Newell but do not want to service as that area's primary EMS responder.



The entire staff underwent EVOC training this year in May. This training consists of hands-on, in vehicle training.

The Service also believes in providing employees with the opportunity to enhance their skills within their service designation as well as to increase level of provider service.

In 2014, the Ambulance Service also hosted an EMT-Advanced course for interested EMTs. As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, the course was not yet completed, but we had 13 enrolled. 10 from the Sturgis area, and the remainder were from the Piedmont Volunteer Fire Department.

In 2014, the Ambulance Service sponsored interested Paramedics to work for their Critical Care designation. While none had finished the course as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 5 Paramedics successfully tested

in early 2015. This allows us to provide a higher level of care in our community. An added benefit is the ability to charge higher rates for this care, increasing our revenue stream.

## EQUIPMENT

The Service has 6 ambulances that are in service and used regularly.



| Year | Make/Model                  | Mileage |
|------|-----------------------------|---------|
| 2003 | Ford Med Tec II (van)       | 89,393  |
| 2003 | Ford Med Tec II (van)       | 86,872  |
| 2007 | Ford Med Tec III (S1)       | 128,431 |
| 2010 | Chev Med Tec III (S4)       | 180,531 |
| 2012 | Ford Wheeled Coach 4X4 (S5) | 20,694  |
| 2013 | Chevy Wheeled Coach (S6)    | 72,787  |

We did not purchase any coaches in 2014. During 2014 Rally, the Service was forced to lease two ambulances to ensure adequate vehicles for the increased call volume. We were unable to secure ambulances as part of a sponsorship contract.

In 2014, the Service continued to face considerable maintenance challenges with our S1 ambulance (the 2007 Ford Med Tec III).



In 2014 the Service received two LUCAS™ Chest Compression System machines through funding from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust. The value of these machines, which we got for no cost, is approximately \$30,000 each.

As stated on their website, the LUCAS machines “assist first responders and paramedics by providing effective and uninterrupted chest compressions on sudden cardiac arrest patients. With automated CPR the fatigue, individual variations or psychological factors are removed from CPR and there is no longer a need for shifting CPR providers every two minutes. Rescuers are freed up to focus on other critical life-saving tasks, such as ventilation, medication and defibrillation, which leads to an increased focus on cardiac arrest management.”



## INSURANCE / LIABILITY

The Service maintains comprehensive liability insurance covering all aspects of operations and administration of the Sturgis Ambulance Service. Meade County is listed as an additional insured. This also covers Dr. Hogue in his capacity as Medical Director.

## OUTREACH



As part of National EMS Week in May 2014, the Sturgis Ambulance Service hosted station tours for elementary school children and had more than 600 students through the facility. These tours provide a safe and educational format in which children can meet the professionals who care for their families in a time of emergency. They also hosted a well-attended public open house, which showcased not only the capabilities of our EMS service, but also provided a venue for the SD Highway Patrol

rollover simulator, the NFS Firewise program, the Masonic Child Identification Program, and State of South Dakota's *Protect your Melon* helmet program. At least 286 people attended the Open House and 206 helmets were handed out to youth in our area. The public also got to see the high tech equipment that is used by our Ambulance Service to provide 24-7 ALS support to our community and surrounding response area of more than 500 square miles. They had demonstrations of the new LUCAS machines as well as tours of the ambulance rigs. The Ambulance Service hosted a 5k run/walk as well as a Zombie walk. More than 20 zombies came out and joined the 45+ walkers and runners.



In addition to all that, the Ambulance Service also took to heart this year's national theme of *Dedicated to Life*. They taught more than 3,025 people the Hands Only CPR, achieving their goal of training 3,000 people. Staff went around to local businesses and also hosted classes at the station. Even the Sturgis City Council spent 15 minutes during a regular meeting to get trained on the new method. By partnering with our residents to help them be willing first responders before our crews arrive on the scene, the Service hopes to increase the chances of survival for those experiencing a medical emergency.





The Sturgis community demonstrated its support for the Sturgis Ambulance Service by *turning the town purple* during EMS Week, with more than 200 purple shirts were sold and worn on the Wednesday of EMS Week.

For more pictures of the 2014 EMS Week, please check out the Sturgis EMS Week Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/emsweek2014>

In 2014, the Sturgis Ambulance Service hosted two EMT-Basic certification courses. Staff provided instruction to a spring class and a fall class. There were 10 students. This serves as development of local, certified first responders as we hired several graduates on a part-time basis.

The Sturgis Ambulance Service provides ride-along opportunities for Paramedic and EMT students in the Western Dakota Tech. About 10 Paramedic students did ride-alongs in 2014. The service continues to be known as one of the better places to do ride-alongs due to the professionalism of the staff and the number of calls. Further, students are extremely likely to have a patient contact during a 12 hour shift.

Another educational outreach program that the Ambulance Service assisted with took place in November 2014. Employees from the Ambulance Service spent a very cold couple of hours outside with the Sturgis Police Department, Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department, National Guard and High School representatives checking seat belts at the High School as part of a seatbelt awareness campaign. The High School students did great – 93% were wearing a seatbelt. By comparison, Meade County’s average for seatbelt safety is 59.9% (which is a dismal 63<sup>rd</sup> out of 66 counties in South Dakota and well below the national average of 86%).



With Council approval, the Ambulance Service provided emergency medical services at the PRCA Rodeo, the High School Rodeo, and the Super Moto Race at no cost to the organizers.

Finally, the Sturgis EMS Association is affiliated with the Sturgis Ambulance Service.

## INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

The Sturgis Ambulance Service is dispatched by Meade County Sheriff Office. The Director meets regularly with the Sheriff to discuss challenges that may arise with dispatching of 911 calls.

The Ambulance Service has continued to work diligently in the past year to maintain and foster relationships with other agencies, including Sturgis Police Department, Meade County Sheriff's Office, Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department, Fort Meade VA Hospital, Rapid City Fire, Spearfish Ambulance Service, the Regional Hospital System, Enning Ambulance, Newell Ambulance, and other smaller services. Late in 2014, the Ambulance Service began attending Rally planning meetings with stakeholders from through the Black Hills and State government in order to prepare for the 75<sup>th</sup> Rally.

Sturgis Regional Hospital has a Level 4 Trauma rating with the State. Our partnership with the hospital is vitally important to keeping this level of certification. As such, the Director meets monthly with hospital staff to review all trauma cases that were treated at Sturgis Regional Hospital. In 2014, Sturgis Regional Hospital had its Trauma Review, which is completed every two years by outside evaluators. The previous letter contained numerous issues and opportunities for enhancement for our Ambulance Service. As a result, numerous changes were put into place over the last two years. The results from this year's Trauma Review our Ambulance Service was again identified as playing a significant role in the community's trauma capabilities. However, this time, there were no areas of improvement identified for our EMS.

The Director sits on the South Dakota Directors' Board. This 6 member board meets every other month and represents all ambulance services (public and private) in the State.

The Ambulance Director was selected to be on the Stakeholders group that is advising the State on the transition of EMS from the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Health. This is a positive organizational transition and we are honored to have a seat at the table as this transition is put into motion.

Finally, the Sturgis Ambulance Service works closely with the Meade 46-1 School District and supports their mission. As an example, each year the Sturgis Ambulance Service participates in the Career Fair at Sturgis Brown High School. An Ambulance is also present at high school football games and wrestling matches. Also, the Service and the school district used a minor bus accident out by Sturgis Brown High School this past year as a learning opportunity for management of a mass casualty accident involving school personnel/children. We partnered together and worked with other agencies to lay out better communication revolving around incidents where school staff and students are involved.

## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

SD Office of Highway Safety released its *Buckle Up South Dakota* safety poster for the 2014 campaign. We were proud to see that Sturgis Paramedics Koree Zagala and Bob Eisenbraun as well as EMT-Bs Jeremy Deuter and Lee Stroschine were showcased in the bottom two pictures.

The Sturgis Ambulance Service was honored with a 1<sup>st</sup> place award for the State EMS Children's 2014 EMS Week Contest. This is a contest that over 40 South Dakota ambulance services applied for. It is a high honor for the service and a great recognition of all the work the crew put forth.

The Meade County Times-Tribune highlighted the Ambulance Service as part of EMS Week in its article "Sturgis Ambulance Service sees stark increase in calls" on May 13<sup>th</sup> and its article "EMS Week Continues

in Sturgis” on May 20th. (See attached.) We were also covered by the Newscenter1 Morning newscast on May 20<sup>th</sup> recognizing us for our EMS Week events.

## UPCOMING FOR 2015

The Ambulance Service is preparing for the 75<sup>th</sup> Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Estimates put the attendance at this Rally well ahead of where it has been the last few years. All levels of government are planning and preparing for this event and the Ambulance Director is very involved in those conversations.

The Ambulance Services are still awaiting a decision by the State regarding the future of a “Community Paramedic” program in South Dakota. This type program encourages hospital and clinics to make use of paramedics to make home checkups and thereby reduce the need for patients to revisit hospitals and clinics.

The Service is still planning to develop new protocols allowing Registered Nurses (RNs) to serve in an emergency medical capacity. The level of care RNs can provide will be similar to the level provided by a Paramedic. However, we are waiting for further integration of the Department of Health and the Board of Osteopath before pursuing this.

The City of Sturgis has implemented the CodeRed Emergency Notification System. This will allow us to communicate in major incident involving EMS (i.e. mass casualty car accidents, etc.).

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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